



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Advised to Avoid Recreating in Brooks Run, Bullitt County *Presence of E. coli found in tributaries*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 28, 2014) – Officials from the Kentucky Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department for Environmental Protection (DEP) are advising the public to avoid contact with water, sediments and stream banks in an unnamed tributary (from the South Louisville Logistics Industrial Park to just south of the Jewish Hospital Medical Center South) of Brooks Run in Bullitt County and in the main stem of Brooks Run below the unnamed tributary because of high *Escherichia coli* levels in the water. *Escherichia coli*, more commonly known as *E. coli*, is a digestive bacteria found in birds and mammals, including humans.

The high levels of *E. coli* in the unnamed tributary and Brooks Run are the result of a wastewater treatment system failure at the Hunters Hollow Wastewater Treatment Plant, which has released untreated wastewater into these streams. The Division of Water uses *E. coli* as an indicator organism for the possible presence of waterborne bacteria including *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia*, Hepatitis and *Shigella* that causes illness. These illnesses are caused by direct contact with or accidental ingestion of contaminated water during recreational activities such as wading, fishing and swimming. Illnesses can also occur through indirect contact if contact areas of the body are not properly cleaned before eating. If contact with contaminated water or soil occurs, avoid eating or placing hands into mouth until the contact area is thoroughly washed with soap and water.

The Kentucky Division of Water continues to collect water samples to check for the presence of *E. coli* in these waterways and is posting signs to inform the public. DEP is working with the DPH to issue advisories on health impacts from high fecal bacterial levels. Once fecal bacterial levels return to normal the advisory will be removed along with signs on the waterways.

This advisory is applied to 1.2 miles of the unnamed tributary of Brooks Run from the Hunters Hollow Wastewater Treatment Plant to its confluence with Brooks Run. This advisory also applies to 4.1 miles of Brooks Run from its confluence with the unnamed tributary to its confluence with Floyds Fork.

For additional information about the safety of Brooks Run for recreating, contact Tom Gabbard, Manager, Compliance and Technical Assistance Branch, with the Kentucky Division of Water at 502-564-3410 or Tom.Gabbard@ky.gov or Kathy Fowler, Director, Division Public Health and Safety at (502) 564-7398.